R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 014 590 VT 003 753

WHY WOMEN WORK.

WOMENS BUREAU, WASHINGTON, D.C. (DEPT. OF LABOR)
REPORT NUMBER DOL-WB-67-324 PUB DATE MAY 67
EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.24 4P.

DESCRIPTORS- *WORKING WOMEN, *MOTIVATION, *INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS,

WOMEN WORK BECAUSE THEY OR THEIR FAMILIES NEED THE MONEY THEY CAN EARN. EVEN WHEN NECESSITIES ARE PROVIDED BY OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS, WOMEN WORK TO RAISE FAMILY LIVING STANDARDS. AT LEAST HALF OF ALL WOMEN WORK OUT OF ECONOMIC NECESSITY. ABOUT 2.9 MILLION MOTHERS HAD TO HELP SUPPORT THEIR CHILDREN IN 1966 BECAUSE THEIR HUSBANDS' INCOMES WERE LESS THAN $5,000 A YEAR. NEARLY TWO OF THREE NONWHITE WIVES WHO WERE NOT LIVING ON FARMS HAD TO WORK. OF THE 48.3 MILLION FAMILIES IN MARCH 1966, 5 MILLION WERE HEADED BY A WOMAN. HALF OF THESE WOMEN WORKED, MOST OF THEM BECAUSE OF ECONOMIC NECESSITY. MORE THAN TWO OF FIVE FAMILIES HEADED BY A WOMAN HAD INCOMES OF LESS THAN $3,000 IN 1965. A FIFTH OF ALL FAMILIES HEADED BY A WOMAN WERE NONWHITE AND HAD A 1965 MEDIAN INCOME OF $2,600. MOST WORKING WIVES WHOSE HUSBANDS ARE UNEMPLOYED OR UNABLE TO WORK WERE GAINFULLY EMPLOYED OUT OF NECESSITY. IN THE 42.1 MILLION HUSBAND-WIFE FAMILIES IN MARCH 1966, THERE WERE 800,000 WORKING WIVES WHOSE HUSBANDS HAD AN INCOME OF LESS THAN $1,000 PER YEAR. OF THE MARRIED WOMEN WHO STOPPED WORKING IN 1963, ONLY A SMALL PERCENTAGE DID SO BECAUSE THEY NO LONGER NEEDED TO WORK. THIS REPORT IS BASED ON DATA FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, BUREAU OF CENSUS, AND U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS. TWO CHARTS GIVE MARITAL STATUS OF WORKING WOMEN AND THEIR HUSBANDS' INCOME LEVELS DURING 1965 AND 1966. (FP)

ED014590

1965 (est.)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Women's Bureau
Washington, D.C. 20210

WHY WOMEN WORK

Most women work because they or their families need the money they can earn. Even when the income contributed by other family members provides the minimum essentials for living, women work to raise family living standards above the level of poverty or deprivation. They seek to provide opportunities for more education or training for their children in this era of changing technology that requires ever-increasing skills. Relatively few women have the option of working solely for personal fulfillment.

At least half of all women work out of economic necessity.

Millions of the women who worked at some time in 1965 worked to support themselves or others; and even then many were not able to raise their own or their family's income above the poverty level. Nearly all the 6.1 million women workers who were widowed, divorced, or separated from their husbands--many of whom were also raising children--were working for compelling economic reasons. This was true also of the majority of the 8.1 million single women workers and the 3.8 million married women workers whose husbands had an income of less than $3,000 a year. If we take into account those women workers whose husbands had incomes between $3,000 and $5,000 (which is still considerably below the level generally regarded as modest but adequate for an urban family of four: about $7,000 in 1965 dollars), another 4.3 million women are added. The marital status of the 33.8 million women who worked at some time in 1965 follows:

Marital status	Women who worked at some time in 1965	
	Number	Percent distribution
Total	33,767,000	100.0
Single	8,110,000	24.0
Married (husband present)	19,561,000	57.9
With husband whose income was:		
Below $3,000 a year	*3,795,000	*11.2
$3,000 to $4,999 a year	*4,303,000	*12.7
$5,000 or over a year	*11,463,000	*33.9
Widowed, divorced, or separated	6,096,000	18.1

*Estimated.

VT003753

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

The number of women in the labor force in any one month of the year is less than the number who work at some time during the year. In March 1966 there were in the labor force 5.5 million widowed, divorced, or separated women, nearly all of whom were working or seeking work out of compelling economic necessity. The majority of the 6.1 million single women and the 2.9 million married women whose husbands had an income of less than $3,000 a year also were in the labor force because of serious economic need. Another 3.3 million married women workers had husbands with incomes between $3,000 and $5,000 a year. The marital status of women in the labor force in March 1966 follows:

Marital status	Women in the labor force in March 1966	
	Number	Percent distribution
Total	26,820,000	100.0
Single	6,106,000	22.8
Married (husband present)	15,178,000	56.6
With husband whose 1965 income was:		
Below $3,000 a year	2,945,000	11.0
$3,000 to $4,999 a year	3,339,000	12.4
$5,000 or over a year	8,894,000	33.2
Married (husband absent)	1,498,000	5.6
Widowed	2,449,000	9.1
Divorced	1,589,000	5.9

About 2.9 million mothers had to help support their children in March 1966.

Of the 15.2 million married women (husband present) who were in the labor force in March 1966, 8.1 million had children under 18 years of age. Of these mothers, 1.1 million had husbands with an income of less than $3,000 a year, and 2.9 million had husbands with an income of less than $5,000 a year. In fact, 41 percent of the 3.2 million working wives with children under 6 years of age and 31 percent of the 4.9 million working wives with children 6 to 17 years of age (none under 6) had husbands with an income of less than $5,000 a year (which is considerably below what is generally regarded as a modest but adequate income for an urban family of four).

Nearly 2 out of 3 of the nonwhite wives who were not living on farms had to work.

Most of the 15.2 million married women (husband present) who were in the labor force in March 1966 were living in nonfarm areas. Of these nonfarm wives, 16 percent of the white and 36 percent of the nonwhite had husbands with an income of less than $3,000 a year in 1965. An additional 21 percent of the white and 29 percent of the nonwhite wives had husbands with incomes between $3,000 and $5,000 a year in 1965.

Many women who are heads of families need to work.

Of the 48.3 million families in March 1966, 5 million were headed by a woman. Half of these women were in the labor force and most of them worked out of economic necessity. More than 2 out of 5 of all families headed by a woman had family incomes of less than $3,000 in 1965. A fifth of all families headed by a woman were nonwhite; their median family income in 1965 was $2,600.

Most working wives whose husbands are unemployed or unable to work are gainfully employed out of necessity.

In the 42.1 million husband-wife families in March 1966, about 850,000 husbands were unemployed and 5.3 million husbands were not in the labor force. About 350,000 wives of unemployed husbands and about a million wives whose husbands were not in the labor force in March 1966 were working or seeking work. Many of these women were the sole support of their families. There were about 800,000 working wives whose husbands had an income of less than $1,000 a year.

Women with husbands employed in low-wage occupations often need to work.

There were 655,000 married women at work in March 1966 whose husbands were farm workers; another 683,000 had husbands working as nonfarm laborers; and 898,000 had husbands employed in service occupations. The median wage or salary income of all men in these three major occupational groups was low in 1965. Moreover, it was below the poverty level among farm workers and at the poverty level for nonfarm laborers.

Study shows women work because of economic necessity.

According to a study made by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, nearly half the women 18 to 64 years old who took jobs in 1963 went to work because of economic need. This was especially true of married women living with their husbands (48.4 percent) and women who were widowed, divorced, or separated from their husbands (54 percent). The proportion who indicated financial necessity or husbands' loss of job as the reason for going to work was even higher among married women whose husbands earned less than $60 a week (73 percent) and those who had children under 6 years of age (56 percent).

Of married women who stopped working in 1963, only a small percentage did so because they no longer needed to work.

Note.--Figures used are from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census; and U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
WOMEN'S BUREAU
WASHINGTON. D.C. 20210

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR